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## AFRL presented with Small Business Award honor

by Katherine Gleason, AFRL Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio—The Air Force Research Laboratory was presented with a Secretary of the Air Force Small and Disadvantaged Business Excellence Award in a ceremony held Sept. 10 at the Pentagon.

Pat Deschaine, Director of Small Business, AFRL, accepted the award for AFRL, which was presented by Undersecretary of the Air Force Peter Teets and Joseph Diamond, Air Force Director of Small Business, in the Pentagon's Executive Dining Room.

"What an honor it was to receive this prestigious award on behalf of AFRL," said Deschaine. "I was thrilled to receive the award from Undersecretary Teets in the presence of our Command staff. Over the years, our people have worked diligently toward increasing small business participation in our acquisitions, and I was proud to see their tireless efforts rewarded. It goes to show that hard work does get recognized—sometimes at the highest levels."

AFRL received this award for its continued efforts to award program dollars to small businesses throughout the 2001 fiscal year (FY01). For FY01, 43.4 percent of AFRL's program dollars went to small businesses. This represented an increase of more than one percent from the previous year.

Not only is AFRL active in awarding contracts and opportunities to small business, but the lab also works to involve numerous segments within the small business community. Small-disadvantaged businesses, women-owned businesses, small business set-asides, and historically black college or university minority institutions are just a few of the areas where AFRL looks to cultivate relationships.

AFRL was involved in numerous efforts to include small businesses from the earliest part of the acquisition process. The lab held 15 briefings for industry that apprised businesses of core technology areas and upcoming new starts. More than 300 Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) topics and 153 Technical Investment Plans (TIPs) were posted in the web to encourage



Pat Deschaine and Thomas E. Jonak from HJ Ford Systems Engineering and Technical Professional Services discuss opportunities for small businesses at a recent meeting. (Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Morgan J. O'Brien III)

discussions. Additionally, AFRL faxed and e-mailed upcoming requirements and solicitations to potential small business participants, and arranged for their capabilities to be presented to the technical directorates.

"We've long acknowledged the importance of the technical contributions that small businesses make to our national defense," said Maj. Gen. Paul D. Nielsen, AFRL Commander. "We intend to keep improving upon our successes and continue to increase the presence of small business in AFRL research and development efforts."

Nominees for this award are evaluated in several areas relating to the inclusion, support, and involvement of small and disadvantaged businesses including: success in meeting assigned quantitative goals; progress toward strategic goals and tactical objectives; and demonstrating process improvements to the Air Force Small Business Program. @